having per capita availability of kerosene much lower than the national average. Accordingly, a high increase of 21.65% has been made in the allocation of kerosene to Rajasthan for the year 1998-99, compared to the 8.58% increase at the country level. This increase amounts to an additional quantity of 78324 MTs. The per capita availability of kerosene in the State has now increased to 10 kg./ annum in 1998-99 from 8.22 kg.'/annum in 1997-98.

Impact of Nuclear Tests on Foreign Policy

*233. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:
SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any long or short term impact of May 1998 Nuclear Tests on our foreign policy; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) India's foreign policy which has enjoyed national consensus, reflects a high degree of continuity. For the last 50 years the primary objective of India's foreign policy has been to pursue self-reliance and maintain independence of thought and action. In keeping with this basic tenet successive governments have taken necessary steps to safeguard India's nuclear option. The recent tests are a logical continuation of the earlier decisions. Despite any apprehensions that may be expressed regarding the short term, in. the long term Government's policies will ensure India taking its rightful place in the community of nations.

Canada's Nuclear Aid to India

*234. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMA-CHANDRA REDDY: SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Canada propose to assist India in the field of Nuclear Energy;

(b) if so, whether any agreement has been reached in this regard;

(c) the time by which Canada is likely to resume neclear aid to India;

(d) whether areas for nuclear cooperation between the two countries have been identified; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) There is no proposal from the Canadian Government to assist India in the field of nuclear energy.

(b) to (e) Does not arise.

Task Force to Evolve National I.T. Policy

235. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Task Force has been created with a view to* evolve a National Information Technology policy;

(b) if so, the names of the Members of. the Committee, its terms of reference and other details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that one of the Members of the said Committee was associated actively with M/s ARM, Hyderabad, which has been chargesheeted by the CBI; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that the draft policy on I.T. presented to Government by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh will be the basis of the aforesaid exercise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THERAILWAYS,AFFAIRS AND PROGRAMME (SHRI RAM MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The names of the Members of the Committee, its terms of reference and the other details are given in the statement *(see* below).

(c) No, Sir, A member of the National Task Force served on the Board of Directors of M/s ARM, Hyderabad. Neither he nor this company has been chargeshceted by the CBI. He has been included as a member of the National Task Force in his capacity, as an IT expert, a former CMD of VSNL and IT Advisor to the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

(d) The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh presented a submission paper entitled 'National Informatics Policy' as an input to the National Task Force. Submission papers have also been received from a number of Industry Associations and Government Departments among others.

Statement

COMPOSITION

Chairperson: Co-	Shri Jaswant Singh Deputy Chairperson, Planning Commission
Chairpersons:	Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh
	Dr. M.G.K. Menon Former Union Minister of State, Science & Technology
Members:	
(1) Dr. N. Seshagiri: *Member-Convenor*	Director General, National Informatics Centre
(2) Shri N. Vittal	Chairman, Public Enterprises Selection Board, former Secretary, Department of Electronics and Chairman, Telecom Commission
(4) Shri A.V. Gokak	Chairman, Telecom Commission
(5) Shri R. Gupta	Secretary, Department of Electronics
(6) Shri P.G. Mankad	Secretary, Ministry of I&B
(7) Shri T.H. Chowdary	Former CMC of VSNL and Information Technology Advisor to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Former Director, IIT, Chennai
(8) Dr. P.V. Indiresan	Executive Director, National Association of Software Companies (NASSCOM)
(9) Shri Dewang Mehta	Chairman & Managing Director, Infosys
(10) Shri N.R.Narayana Murthy	President, WIPRO Computers
(11) Shri Ashok Soota	Vice Chairman and MD, NUT
(12) Shri Rajendra Pawar	Senior Advisor (Technology), CII
(13) Dr. Y.S. Rajan	Managing Director, Infrastructure Leasing & Finance Services (ILFS)
(14) Shri Ravi Parthasarathi	IT professional
(15) Shri Anil Bakht	Director (Communications and Research), PMO
(16) Shri Sudhecndra Kulkarni	

TASKS

(1) This Task Force will formulate the draft National Policy on Informatics whose aim will be to enable India to emerge as an Information Technology Superpower within the next ten years. It will submit the draft Policy to the Prime Minister in three months.

(2) The Task Force will recommend an appropriate empowered institutional mechanism to implement this policy as a national mission with the participation of the Central and State Governments, industry, academic institutions, and the society at large.

(3) This Task Force will recommend, within one month, intermediate steps that the Government needs to take to remove bottlenecks and give a big boost to India's Information Technology industry.

(4) This Task Force will prepare a Vision Statement that will excite and energize the people of India, creating the faith in them that Information Technology vitally aids personal growth and national growth. It will also suggest a strategy for the effective articulation and dissemination of that Vision, so as to create an ethos, an ambiance, a mindset, and a- work culture consistent with the needs of the emerging knowledge-driven global civilisation.

(5) This Task Force will prepare a blueprint for making the adoption of Information Technology into a national movement, with a wide network of empowered task forces all governmental and non-governmental levels.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(1) Recommend a strategy for the extensive use of Information Technology in all areas of the national economy—agriculture, industry, trade, and services—as a critical input in making India a global economic power.

(2) Prepare the design for building a world-class physical. Institutional, and regulatory IT infrastructure, which is appropriate for India. This design will embrace the growing convergence of telecommunications, computers, consumer electronics, and the media infrastructure (minus its content).

(3) Towards this end, determine the means for creating a National Informatics Infrastructure (Nil) backbone, bridging it to the Local Informatics Infrastructure (LII) and Global Informatics Infrastructure (GU). The design of the Nil will be dynamic, taking into account the rapidly changing nature of Information Technology.

(4) Recommend how Nil can be created at an optimal cost by using the existing resources of the various wings of Government such as the Department of Telecommunications, Prasar Bharati, Railways, Power Grid Corporation of India, etc.

(5) Suggest measures for achieving a massive expansion in the use of .the Internet by all sections of society, especially in business and education, and development of Indian content on the Internet.

(6) Recommend a strategy for boosting the learning and use of Information Technology in Indian languages. The Policy will suggest measures to promote the development of software, especially educational and commercial software, in Indian languages.

(7) Develop a strategy for a twenty-fold increase in India's software and other IT service exports in the next ten years. In particular, the Policy will focus on the development of world-class software products and brands that can quickly establish global dominance.

(8) Suggest measures to catalyze the growth of exports through the extensive use of E-commerce and EDI (electronic data interchange).

(9) Suggest ways in which the use of IT can be maximized in the Government at all levels, so as to make its functioning people-friendly, transparent, and accountable.

(10) Develop a strategy for dramatically increasing the PC density in the country and, to that end, ensure that every household and commercial establishment that has a telephone also has a computer. The strategy will aim to facilitate the availability of computer hardware, software, and connectivity at the lowest possible cost.

(11) Devise a strategy for establishing a strong and internationally competitive domestic manufacturing base for computers, computer components, and peripherals.

(12) Design a training and manpower development. plan involving Government;, agencies, private businesses,, voluntary organizations, educational institutions and others to quadruple the number of IT professionals in the country in the next two years. The Task Force will suggest a plan to implement the commitment made in the National Agenda for Governance to ensure universal computer literacy in all secondary schools in the country. The plan will also aim at making available IT education to all those sections of the economy where it serves as a productivity multiplier.

(13) Develop a strategic plan to raise the necessary financial resources to realize the objectives of the National Informatics Policy. This plan will rely on innovative means of funding that minimize government outlay.

(14) Suggest an appropriate legal framework for the creation of an IT-based society, with due focus on intellectual property rights (IPR), secrecy, security, and safety of information.

(15) Recommend how India can leverage its global competitiveness in InfoTech to play a prominent role in the development of IT in other countries, especially those that are underdeveloped.

Development of Cryogenic Engine by ISRO

*236. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present status of the project for development of cryogenic engine by ISRO and the commitment made by Russia in this regard;

(b) whether Government have taken fresh initiatives for development and production of cryogenic engine in technical collaboration with Russia;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the proposal to seek Russian cooperation in this regard has been discussed by the Prime Minister in his recent visit to Russia, if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the Details, of joint ventures finalised for strengthening defence production upto 2000 AD with Russia and implications thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) The agreement with GLAVKOSMOS, Russia for the development and supply of two flight worthy cryogenic stages as well as technology transfer and training was signed in January, 1991. Due to geo-political reasons, the contract was modified during December, 1993 after renegotiations by deleting technology transfer with due compensation. According to the modified contract, in addition to the originally planned two cryo stages, two more flight worthy stages and two ground models will be supplied in lieu of the technology. ISRO has also exercised the option to buy three additional cryo stages. The progress on the development of Cryogenic Stages in